

Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, December 9, 2025

TIME: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Winnebago County Human Services Building, 220 Washington Avenue, Oshkosh, WI, Room 033

PRESENT:

In-person: Marla Kopecky Penney (Focus on Freedom & Empower Freedom/The Support Exchange), Abby Drover (Love the Mess/The Support Exchange), Wendy Propson (VPI), Kaci Casey (Head Start).
Virtual: Tammy Ross (The Sensory Club Neenah), Tammi Kohlman (Remarkable), Angela Wade (Trio Academy), Emily Paschen (NOVA), Jenna Lemberger (parent), Amy Rosplochowski (parent), Christa Morgan-Neff (parent), Dana Hunter (Intentions Behavior Consulting), Candy Hall (Childcare Resource and Referral), Kim Greene

STAFF PRESENT:

In-person: Tracy Gehrke (Public Health), Liz Riley, Bridget Hunter, Jenna Stueck, Jill Butler, Bridget Hunter, Jenna Stueck.

Virtual: Hannah Ulwelling, Halle Abernathy, Liz Schlosser, Hailey Drummond, Jessica Oaks, Caitlin Lefebvre, Rachael Van Dyke.

A. Call to Order: **Tracey Gehrke** called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 p.m.

B. Approval of September 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes: **Bridget Hunter** made a motion for approval of the September 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by **Jenna Stueck**, motion carried.

C. Business Items:

1. Presentation – The Support Exchange – Networking Group – Marla Kopecky Penney and Abby Drover:

- Introductions – Abby works with Love the Mess support group for families and parents of children with special needs. Marla founded Focus on Freedom which provides in-home daily living skills training, career planning, and caregiver supports along with Empower Freedom to assist families in rural areas.
- How The Support Exchange began – first provider fair was held in March 2024 where providers connected with each other and realized community needed ongoing space to collaborate.
- What The Support Exchange is – Monthly provider gathering with round-table collaboration, mini-presentations, light breakfast, conversations, shared community resources, meant to be casual. Feedback thus far shows an impact including stronger provider connections and improved continuity for families.
- How to connect with Support Exchange – Attend monthly meetings, support resource clarity, connect families to providers, present on updates, join the March fair.

- Monthly meetings – 3rd Tuesday monthly, 7:30 networking, 8:00 meeting, 9:00 networking. Rotating hosts provide light breakfast, guided agenda, open table talk, supportive/collaborative atmosphere.
- March Partner Fair – Will be held at the Boys & Girls Club Hyde Family Community Center, county/school/provider collaboration with resource tables, guided conversations, birth-early adult continuum, family-centered flow chart. Past feedback from parents expressed was mostly the uncertainty of, "I don't know what questions to even ask to know whether or not that is something I actually need." Plan is a set up based on the focus-areas of behavior strategies, sensory input, mental health, birth to three, and transition to adulthood.
- How to partner with us – Join next meeting, bring a colleague, share resources, be part of building a connected system, support families together.
- Email: providerexchange@winnebago.org
- Next meeting: December 16, Hyde Family Community Center in Oshkosh, beginning with networking at 7:30 networking, 8:00 meeting.

2. Member Sharing:

Tracy Gehrke of Public Health shared the following updates:

- Flu Clinics – Public Health has been hosting flu clinics for children, adults, and county employees. Mostly seeing rhinoviruses, common colds.
- Diaper banks are available in Neenah and Oshkosh offices which can be utilized once a month for children up to age three.
- Child passenger safety seat program – assists families with car seat installations. Locations are Oshkosh Fire Department and Fox Crossing Fire Station in Neenah.
- New moms/babies – Tracy's entire caseload is non-English speaking. Education is provided on safe sleep, car seats, and household temperature control.

Kaci Casey shared that Head Start serves Winnebago, Outagamie, Calumet, and Shawano Counties. Winnebago County has one center in Menasha and two in Oshkosh serving children ages 3-5. Services are free for qualifying families based on income, children in foster care, SSI, and homeless. Families are assigned a family resource specialist who provides goal setting, barrier removal, and home visits. There are ten classrooms in Oshkosh ranging from half-day to 7.25-hour classes and Menasha classes are the extended timeframe. Applications are accepted throughout the year. Program is currently 384 children in total. Brochures with QR codes were distributed to those in attendance. Kaci noted that posters are available in multiple languages.

Staff members in attendance providing self-introductions included: **Liz Riley, Bridget Hunter, Hannah Ulwelling, Jenna Stueck, Jill Butler, Jessica Oaks, Halle Abernathy, Rachael Van Dyke, Liz Schlosser, Caitlin Lefebvre, Jenna Stueck**

Jenna Lemberger is a parent who has two adoptive children receiving CLTS services.

Abby Drover of Love the Mess provided a self-introduction and reported activities will begin after the new year as her partner in the group had a baby in October.

Tammy Ross reported that the Sensory Club is hosting a Christmas event for families this Saturday, December 13. Santa will be there for a sensory-friendly experience. Tammy is working with the Boys & Girls Club on bringing the sensory group to the Sensory Club in March. More details will be provided at the next committee meeting.

Tammi Kohlman reported that Remarkable is gearing up for having a lot of children over the winter break timeframe. After school programming is being added on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for children ages 12+ with a daily living skills component, 2 to 2 ½ hour sessions daily, transportation is provided.

Emily Paschen reported that NOVA is currently able to start children sooner due to a smaller than usual waitlist.

Amy Rospolochowski is the parent of a 15-year-old daughter receiving CLTS services.

Christa Morgan-Neff is the parent of a child with behavioral/emotional regulation issues receiving CLTS services.

Angela Wade reported that Trio provides primarily ABA therapy. After school respite and social skills groups are also provided. A 4-week long social skills group starts in January and a 12-week will start in February. Evaluations for groups are done at any point primarily for ages 6 to 12.

Dana Hunter reported that Intentions Behavior Consulting is a CLTS provider specifically working with caregivers in the area of behavior management regulation. There is currently no waitlist for services.

Candy Hall stated that Childcare Resource and Referral is located in Kimberly supporting childcare providers in Winnebago County which includes behavior observations for children typically birth through age five.

3. Children's COP and CLTS Services – **Hannah Ulwelling**:

- Service and Program Updates: Hannah reported three new parents have joined the committee. She has provided staff with a short write up to share with parents.
- Provider updates:
 - Guided Discovery – Kim Green from Guided Discovery recently partnered with EAA to host the first ever sensory-friendly area for EAA's *Christmas in the Air* program and is also working with EAA on revamping their children's area. Additionally, Guided Discovery is able to take more clients due to hiring another PCBA. After-school times are full, there are only daytime openings, and Dr. Phan Hong-Lishner continues to do diagnostics.
 - Options for Independent Living event entitled *Sensory Santa 2025* is being held 12/10/2025 for groups and 12/11/2025 for families at 555 Country Club Road, Green Bay providing a relaxed, sensory friendly environment, photos with Santa, crafts. Registration for groups call 920-609-2142, individuals call, scan QR code, or register at <https://bit.ly/OptionsSensorySanta>.
- Staffing Updates – **Rhonda Reinke** has been promoted to being the fourth supervisor and her QA position is being posted. Currently in the process of hiring three additional service coordinators. Six additional service coordinators have been budgeted for next year.
- Referral Data – There have been 123 referrals since the last meeting in September. Average referral to enrollment time is 55 days which is well within the 90-day requirement. Statewide enrollment data is available at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts/enrollment-dashboard.htm>.
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services – The Fall 2025 issue of the CLTS newsletter *All in for Kids* came out in October with articles including the story of a CLTS child from Brown County, requests for feedback from CLTS families, and details on DHS plans for renewal of waiver process for 2027-2031. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/newsletters/kids-2025-03.pdf>

- Waitlist Update – there is currently no waitlist. Time of referral to worker assignment is approximately one month after which screening and enrollment occurs quickly.

4. Birth to Three Services (B-3): Wendy Propson reported there are 312 kids combined between Winnebago and Outagamie Counties.

- Staffing Updates: There is a position posted for a physical therapist due to a retirement. Staff have two weeks off over the holidays. Over this timeframe, Wendy continues to take referrals and schedule intakes for January.
- Breakfast with Santa was held this past Saturday with 259 people in attendance.
- VPI and VARC Merger is occurring as of 01/01/2026 combining companies with similar programs. VARC has an additional component of having a childcare center. Wendy has written a grant application in hopes to begin planning to add a childcare center as well.
- Referrals remain around 100 per month and enrollment numbers are staying steady after focusing on outreach in 2025.

5. CCS/CST Youth Services: Jill Butler reported she is one of three supervisors overseeing youth mental health programming. Intensive CCS and CST in-home services are partnered with a service facilitator in mental health and a therapist. There is a small waitlist for services. Jill oversees 11 staff.

6. 2026 Focus Areas and Committee Role:

- 2025 Focus Area – In 2025, the committee focused on the transition to adult services and mental health. Staff was provided with mental health de-escalation training, met with youth justice and behavioral health teams, law enforcement, and 9-8-8.
- Potential focus area ideas for 2026:
 - Notable gaps in services.
 - Challenges related to cultural differences such as communication and supervision of children.
 - Addressing when children "fall in the middle" because of not quite fitting the criteria for receiving services.
 - Medicaid requirement for CLTS can be a barrier especially for refugees and those who are not here legally. Some simply fear reaching out to county government.
 - Refugee families tend to raise their children as a community, do not describe disabilities the same way as we do, and could benefit from being taught what is considered acceptable in this country in reference to supervision of children. Learning more about cultures being served would be beneficial. World Relief staff, literacy supports, interpreters, and the Winnebago Area Literacy Council were discussed as potentially being able to assist with cultural related questions, learning better ways to explain benefits and processes to families in plain language, as well as with proper dialects.
 - Local interpreter services can be beneficial when interpreters get to know clients thus allowing for better coordination whereas interpreter providers that are country-wide often result in being connected to a different interpreter each time. Noted this is a county contracting issue as smaller companies do not have large insurance policies as required by the County.

D. 2026 meeting dates: 02/10/2026, 05/12/2025, 09/08/2025, 12/08/2025 at 12:30 p.m. in the Winnebago County Human Services Building, 220 Washington Avenue, Oshkosh, WI, Room 033.

E. Adjourn: With no other business, **Tracey Gehrke** requested a motion for adjournment, motion made by **Wendy Propson**, seconded by **Bridget Hunter**. Meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Ulwelling.